

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. **(Withdrawn)** A catheter comprising:
a catheter shaft including a proximal end and a distal end secured to a balloon,
a luer fitting arranged at the proximal end of the catheter shaft, the proximal end of the catheter shaft having a permanently affixed bending section, the bending section having flexibility greater than that of the section of the catheter shaft joining the proximal end, the bending section including a plurality of offset cuts formed in the proximal end of the catheter shaft, and
a fluid impermeable covering disposed to seal the plurality of offset cuts.
- 2-3. **(Canceled)**
4. **(Withdrawn)** The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the offset cuts extend in a direction generally parallel to one another.
- 5-6. **(Canceled)**
7. **(Withdrawn)** The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the seal is designed as a sleeve or tube which is fastened to the proximal end of the catheter shaft.
8. **(Canceled)**
9. **(Withdrawn)** The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the bending section is formed as a soft-annealed material section of the catheter shaft.
10. **(Withdrawn)** The catheter according to claim 9, wherein the soft-annealed section is surrounded by a spiral spring.

11. **(Withdrawn)** The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the bending section is formed by a transition member of the fitting which comprises a flexible plastic material.

12. **(Withdrawn)** The catheter according to claim 11, wherein the transition member has an undercut which is engaged by a complementary holding member of the proximal end of the catheter shaft.

13-14. **(Canceled)**

15. **(Withdrawn)** The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the seal is fastened by an adhesive to the proximal end of the catheter shaft.

16-25. **(Canceled)**

26. **(Currently Amended)** A catheter comprising:

a catheter shaft having a distal end and a proximal end, the proximal end including a bending section, the bending section comprising one or more spiral cuts in the catheter shaft, the bending section having a flexibility greater than the flexibility of the portion of the catheter shaft adjacent the bending section;

a balloon secured to the distal end; ~~and~~

a fitting secured to the proximal end~~[[.]]; and~~

~~wherein the proximal end includes a permanently affixed bending section having a flexibility greater than that of the section of the catheter shaft joining the proximal end, wherein the bending section includes a spiral cut formed in the proximal end, and wherein a fluid impermeable covering is disposed upon the bending section to seal the spiral cut bending section.~~

27. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fitting is a luer fitting.

28. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fitting includes a passageway in flow communication with the catheter shaft.

29. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the spiral cut is formed with a selectable number of spiral sections.

30. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fluid impermeable covering is shaped as a sleeve or a tube.

31. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fluid impermeable covering is adhesively bonded to the bending section.

32. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fitting comprises a transition member connected to the proximal end, and wherein the transition member is structured to prevent unintended kinking of at least a portion of the bending section.

33. **(Canceled)**

34. **(Canceled)**

35. **(New)** A catheter comprising:

a fitting;

a catheter shaft including a distal end and proximal end being coupled to the fitting, the proximal end including a bending section comprising one or more cuts in the catheter shaft, the bending section having a flexibility greater than the flexibility of the adjacent portion of the catheter shaft; and

a fluid impermeable covering disposed to seal the one or more cuts of the bending section.

36. **(New)** The catheter of claim 35, wherein the one or more cuts are spiral cuts.

37. **(New)** The catheter of claim 35, wherein the fitting comprises a transition member coupled to the catheter shaft.

38. **(New)** The catheter of claim 35, further comprising a balloon at the distal end of the catheter shaft.

39. **(New)** The catheter of claim 38, further comprising an inflation device coupled to the fitting for expanding the balloon.

40. **(New)** The catheter of claim 35, wherein the fitting is a luer fitting.